

Models of Social Science

L98 AMCS 4023

M/W 10-11:30

Andrew Rehfeld
Political Science
American Culture Studies

Office: Seigle 233
rehfeld@wustl.edu
935-5812

Office Hours: Fri: 1:30-2:30 and by appointment.

Course Description

Can the methods of the natural sciences be used to study social phenomena? What particular problems does the fact that social science studies “humans” rather than “non-humans” pose for the methods we use to study them? And where did the social sciences (both the disciplines and the conceptual issues) come from historically? These are the animating questions of this course.

The class is divided into three units. We begin with an initial overview into the aims and history of the social sciences with examples from Anthropology, Political Science, Economics and Sociology. In the next unit we consider in detail how science forms a justification for belief, its structure, and the relation between theory and observation. In this unit also take up issues of causation and inference. In the third unit we look at the foundational claims of social science as a branch of the natural sciences and also encounter the critique that human intention and meaning make the methods of the natural sciences an incomplete model for studying social phenomenon.

The course presumes some background in social science.

Required Texts:

- Auguste Comte. 1988. *Introduction to Positive Philosophy*. Hackett: Indianapolis ISBN: 0872200507
- *Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences*. California: Stanford University Press. ISBN: 0804727279
- Carl Hempel. 1966. *Philosophy of Natural Science*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. ISBN: 0136638236
- Paul Boghossian. 2007. *Fear of Knowledge: against relativism and constructivism*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780199230419
- John Searle. 2010. *Making the Social World: The Structure of Human Civilization*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press). ISBN: 9780-19-539617-1.
- *Philosophy of the Social Sciences: Philosophical Theory and Scientific Practice*. C. Mantzavinos, Editor. (New York: Cambridge University Press). 978-0-521-73906

Recommended Text:

- Peter Godfrey-Smith. 2003. *Theory and Reality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 0-226-30063-3
- Readings with an double asterisk below can be found through ares.wustl.edu
 - i) Choose “Models of Social Science”
 - ii) Enter the course password “popper” and click “Accept” after reading the copyright agreement.

Course Requirements

20% Class Participation

Class participation involves regular attendance, written completion of short study questions, and participation in class discussion.

50% Take home exams.

Take-home exams will be given out no later than one week before they are due (they may be e-mailed to you if distributed earlier). Please note that they will cover material through the *due date* of the exam.

25%. Take-home exam 1: Friday, March 9, 12:00 Noon, Poli. Sci. office, Seigle Hall

25% Take-home exam 2: Friday, April 13, 12 Noon, Poli Sci office, Seigle Hall

30% Final Paper

A final paper of 1500-2000 words will be due by noon on May 7, 12:30 PM, Political Science office, Seigle Hall.

Late exam/paper policy

All due dates are stated above. Because of this, late papers and exams are frowned upon and carry a high penalty: one letter grade deduction for every day (or part thereof) that the paper is late. (Family or medical emergencies are the only exception and you must see me as soon as possible.) If you have any questions about this policy, or if anything is unclear, please don't hesitate to speak with me.

Plagiarism

All written work submitted by students must be of their own creation and design. Any time someone else's words are used to substantiate an argument, illustrate a point, or for any other reasons, they must be set off in quotation marks and a reference given where that quote may be found. Any time someone else's ideas are paraphrased in new words, the original author and source must be cited in the same manner. Failure to do these and other basic rules of academic integrity as outlined in your student guide constitutes plagiarism.

If you are unsure whether a particular use of someone else's words or ideas is a violation of these rules, please do not hesitate to ask me about it *before submitting your work*. If you are caught plagiarizing I will refer the matter to the academic integrity panel at the dean's office. However, I reserve the right to impose a more serious penalty than that panel suggests, including failing a student for the entire class if *any* plagiarized work is submitted as a student's own. I am not lenient in these matters.

Reading synopsis

I. Introduction: What is “Social Science?”

Wed, 1/18: Introduction: On Knowledge, Science, Interpretation and the Aspirations of the Social Sciences.

Recommended: Peter Godfrey-Smith, *Theory and Reality*, Introduction

Mon. 1/23: History of the Social Sciences:
Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences, pp. 1-93

Recommended:
Godfrey-Smith, *Theory and Reality*, Chapter 9.

** Dorothy Ross, “Changing Contours of the Social Science Disciplines.” **MSS:** Chapter 13, pp. 205-237

** Theodore M. Porter, “Genres and Objects of Social Inquiry, from the Enlightenment to 1890.” **MSS:** Chapter 2, pp. 13-39

W 1/25 Social Science 1: Examples from Economics and Political Science
**Wayne L. Francis, “House to Senate Career Movement in the US States: The Significance of Selectivity.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 3. (August 1993), 309-320.

John J. Donohue and Steven D. Levitt, “The Impact of Legalized Abortion on Crime,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol CXVI, May 2001, No. 2. 379-420. Download from:
<http://pricetheory.uchicago.edu/levitt/Papers/DonohueLevittTheImpactOfLegalized2001.pdf>

M. 1/30 Social Science 2: Example from Sociology (History and Psychology)
** Solloway, *Born to Rebel*, Introduction and pp. 1-85

W. 2/1 Social Science 3: Example 1 from Anthropology
** Clifford Geertz, “Notes on a Ballenese Cockfight.”

M. 2/6 Social Science 4: Example 2 from Anthropology
** Marjorie Shostak, *Nisa: The Life and Words of a Kung Woman*.
Chapter 5: Trial Marriages
Chapter 6: Marriage
Chapter 7: Wives and Co-Wives

W. 2/8 August Comte, *Introduction to Positive Philosophy*

Recommended: ** Johan Heilbron, “Social Thought and Natural Science.” **MSS:** Chapter 3, pp. 40-56.

II. The Aim and Structure of Science

- M 2/13 The Aim of Science 1.
Boghossian, *Fear of Knowledge*
Chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-47, 54-57). Pp. 47-54 recommended.
- W 2/15 The Aim of Science 2.
Boghossian, *Fear of Knowledge*
Chapters 5-7 pp. 58-110. (Chapters 8 and 9 recommended)
- M 2/20 The Structure of Science 1: Positivism, part 1
Carl Hempel, *Philosophy of Natural Science*, Chapters 1-4.

Recommended Reading:
Godfrey-Smith, *Theory and Reality*, Chapter 2.

** Pike and Agnew, "This Thing Called Science" in *The Science Game: An Introduction to Research in the Social Sciences*, (Prentice Hall, NJ) 1991.
- W 2/22 The Structure of Science 2: Positivism, part 2
Carl Hempel, *Philosophy of Natural Science*, Chapters 5-6

Recommended:
Godfrey-Smith, *Theory and Reality*, Chapter 3.
**Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation."
- M 2/27 The Structure of Science 3: Falsification
** Karl Popper "Science: Conjectures and Refutations," in *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (Routledge: London) 1989. Chapter 1, pp. 3-65

Recommended:
Godfrey-Smith, *Theory and Reality*, Chapter 4
- W 2/29 The Structure of Science 4:
Critics of positivism: ** Benton and Craib, "Some Problems of Empiricism and Positivism." Chapter 3 in *Philosophy of Social Science: The Philosophical Foundations of Social Thought*. London: Palgrave. 2001.

Recommended: Peter Godfrey-Smith, *Theory and Reality*, Chapters 3 and 4

Take Home Exams distributed by Friday, March 2.
- M 3/5 Verification and Causation in Practice: The role of probability
** "Causation Theory and the Causes of Sexual Violence" Schauer, "Symposium on the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography: Causation Theory and the Causes of Sexual Violence," *ABF Research Journal*, Volume 1987, Fall

Recommended:
Godfrey-Smith, *Theory and Reality*, Chapters 13 and 14
- W 3/7 Empirics and Tests: the case of deliberative democracy.

**Dennis Thompson, "Deliberative Democratic Theory and Empirical Political Science." Annual Review of Political Science, 2008, pp. 497-520.

**Diana C. Mutz, "Is Deliberative Democracy a Falsifiable Theory?" Annual Review of Political Science, 2008, 521-538.

**Jerome Mathis, "Deliberation with Evidence." American Political Science Review, Vo. 105, No. 3.

First Take Home Exam Due Friday, March 9, Noon, in Political Science Office, Seigle Hall.

III. Translating Natural Science to Social Phenomena: Hopes and Cautions

Hopes

- M 3/19 John Searle, *Making the Social World*.
Chapters 1 (including appendix), 2 and 3.
- W 3/21 Searle, Continued.
- M 3/26 John Searle, *Making the Social World*
Chapters 5-7
- W 3/28 **NO CLASS**
- M 4/2 Searle, Continued.
- W 4/4 Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?*
Chapter 1: "Why ask what?"
Chapter 2: "Too Many Metaphors."

Second Take Home Exam will be distributed by Friday, 4/6.

- M 4/9 Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?*
Chapter 4: "Madness: Biological or Constructed?"
Chapter 5: "Kind-making: The Case of Child Abuse."

Cautions

- W 4/11 Interpretation and intentionality
** Charles Taylor, "Interpretation and the Science of Man," pp. 33-81
- Recommended:* ** Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward and Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (Basic Books: New York) 1973, 3-30 and "On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding."

** Clifford Geertz, "Notes on a Balinese Cockfight."

**Michelle Z. Rosaldo, "Moral/Analytic Dilemmas Posed by the Intersection of Feminism and Social Science"

**Max Weber, "Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy"

Second Midterm Exam Due, Friday, April 13 at Noon.

M 4/16 **Isaiah Berlin, "The Concept of Scientific History"; and "The Sciences and the Humanities" (sections I and II).

Recommended: **Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "First Discourse on the Arts and Sciences"

Reminders: Theory, practice and society

W 4/18 ** Benton and Craib, "Science Nature and Society: some alternatives to empiricism." Chapter 4, in *Philosophy of Social Science: The Philosophical Foundations of Social Thought*. London: Palgrave. 2001.

M 4/23 **Elisabeth Ellis, "Provisionalism in the Study of Politics," in *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*, eds., Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud. New York: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 350-376,

W 4/25 **Andrew Rehfeld. 2010. "Offensive Political Theory." *Perspectives on Politics*. Vol 8, no. 2. May 2010. Pp. 465-486.

Final Paper Due: May 7, 12:30 PM.